

Worship

We worship our work, work at our play and play at our worship.

“I am the Lord your God ... You shall have no other gods before Me... You shall not make for yourself an idol ... You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God... (Ex. 20: 2-6)

“...you shall not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is jealous, is a jealous God...” (Ex. 34:14).

From the beginning we were created by God to be His worshipers.

I. **Worship and His Presence:**

Worship is about our relationship with God.

As a new Christian I was excited about the Christian life: Bible study, singing, prayer meetings, church services, youth group and sharing the gospel every chance I could. I never could learn enough. I was ripe for discipleship.

I was particularly drawn to worship music.

Classical hymns and great works of praise gripped my heart and drew me into God’s presence. I didn’t know enough to explain it but felt it deeply, passionately, completely. When I sang and played and listened to music that honored Christ, I sensed God’s deep pleasure too. He was all I wanted in life. It was the presence of the Lord in my heart that filled the emptiness. There was a God-shaped vacuum inside that only He could fill.

Shackled by a heavy burden; ‘neath a load of guilt and shame,
I will never cease to praise Him, I’ll shout it while eternity reigns.
He touched me, O He touched me; and O the joy that floods my soul.
Something happened and now I know; He touched me and made me whole

In prayer a believer communicates with God – Father to son.

When we became children of God He sent

“...the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’” (Gal. 4:6).

Worship is the part of prayer and public praise in which love is expressed.

Worship comes from the English word, “worth-ship,”

and when used of God, means to give Him worth.

Worship is a connection with God

Eugene Peterson has said,

“Worship is an act which develops feelings for God,
not a feeling for God which is expressed in an act of worship.”¹

Worship doesn't always involve feelings.

One of the two most commonly used words in the NT for worship is *latreuo*, which means, “to work or serve.”

R. Kent Hughes writes,

“This tells us implicitly that worship involves work – disciplined work. It is from this word that liturgy is derived, for liturgy is one's work in worship.”²

A second common word for worship is *Proscanaio* – to prostrate oneself.

This is a posture of total humility: subject to Sovereign.

I believe that worship is beholding God, sensing Him and being transported into His presence. Though the heaven and earth cannot contain Him, yet into His manifest presence we rarely enter and He rarely reveals to us. We do not enter heaven but heavenly atmosphere enters where we are; and we are filled with peace, joyful rest, and glory.

Tozer writes,

“We are here to be worshipers first and workers only second. We take a convert and immediately make a worker out of him. God never meant it to be so. God meant that a convert should learn to be a worshiper, and after that he can learn to be a worker The work done by a worshiper will have eternity in it.”

A. W. Tozer, “Worship: the missing Jewell of Evangelism”

Isaiah saw the Lord he cried out,

“Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips,
and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the
King, the Lord of hosts” (Is. 6:5).

¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1980), p. 50.

² R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*, (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2001), p. 115.

The wise men saw the Christ child they rejoiced, offered gifts and worshiped Him.

The disciples saw the risen Christ they worshiped Him.

Thomas recognized the risen Christ he fell down and worshiped and proclaimed, "My Lord and my God!"

John wrote,

"When I saw Him I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, 'Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.'" (Rev. 1:17-18)

When we touch the glory we worship.

II. Worship and Prayer

A vital ingredient of prayer is worship.

In the Lord's prayer Jesus gave us the model prayer:

"Pray, then, in this way:

Our Father, who is in heaven,

Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.

Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt. 6:9-10).

Jesus said that we should begin praying honoring God our heavenly Father.

We lift up and honor His name above all names, His rule above every rule, and His will above every other will on earth. It is a combination of praise, proclamation and submission to God as Father and King.

Worship can be combined with adoration of His glorious heavenly attributes.

Before asking for anything in prayer, begin with worship.

Our faith will increase as the size of our God increases.

Our needs and requests will become small before a mighty and glorious God.

David was a man after God's heart.

He found that God was more than sufficient as he defeated giants.

Worship is more than form, it comes from friendship, closeness to God. Joseph Scriven was born into a prosperous Irish family and on September 10, 1819 successfully completed the requirements for entrance to Trinity College in Dublin. Shortly afterwards he left Trinity to join the Army. However his military career was cut short by poor health, and he returned to complete a Bachelor's degree at Trinity College.

With his education behind him and a long and happy life ahead, Joseph Scriven decided to wed his sweetheart. But the night before their wedding, tragedy struck. Scriven's fiancée was thrown from the horse she was riding and into a river, where she was drowned. Overcome with grief, Scriven became despondent and introspective and withdrew from his friends and family. He made a decision to leave the religious traditions of his parents in favor of those of the Plymouth Brethren. In connection with that decision, he determined to leave his homeland and migrate to Canada in 1844, at the age of twenty-five.

With the move, Scriven refocused his life to concentrate on living the lifestyle described by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount. He became a servant of the underprivileged, assisting the handicapped, the poverty-stricken, the ill, and the imprisoned. He cut and hauled wood for destitute families so they might survive the frigid winters of Port Hope, Ontario. He worked for those who could not pay.

Once again Scriven fell in love with a young Canadian woman and again planned to marry. But before the wedding took place, once more tragedy struck as the young woman contracted Pneumonia and died.

At the same time, Scriven received news that his mother, back in Dublin, was seriously ill. He did not have the funds to finance a trip home, so he wrote the three verses of a poem he titled "Pray without Ceasing." And sent them to his mother hoping they would lift her spirits and comfort her.

A short time later, when Scriven himself was confined to his bed with illness, a neighbor stopped in to see him. As they talked, the friend saw a paper at the side of the bed with the words of Scriven's poem scrawled on it. With his permission he submitted it for publication in a small collection of poetry called Hymns and Other Verses.

Some time later, Charles Converse, a well-known composer of that day, wrote a melody for the verses Scriven had penned, and retitled it according to the first lines of the poem, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus."

Worship and prayer knit our hearts to God, as we worship without ceasing.

III. Worship and the Person

When Jesus was talking with the woman at the well she asked Him a question:

“Our Fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you people say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.”

Jesus answered, *“It’s not about the place, but the heart of the worshiper.”*

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.”

Then Jesus made this statement,

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”
(John 4:20-24)

God desires worship above all else.

Worship is to become the ultimate priority of this life for every believer.

What kind of worship does God desire from us?

■ Worship in spirit and truth

Truth

To worship in truth means that we are informed by the Word of God about God. Our worship is governed by what we know and believe of God.

Spirit

To worship in spirit is to worship from our inner person – our human spirit. True worship flows from the inside out; from the heart.

Jesus warned hypocrites with the words of Isaiah:

“These people honor Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. They worship Me in vain.” (Mk. 7:6-7 from Is. 29:13)

Unless worship is from the heart (spirit and truth) it is worthless worship.

IV. Worship and Practice

How will we worship from our heart?

Worship from the heart means taking time.

Luke 10:38-42

Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations and she came up to Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me." But the Lord answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered all about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Spending time with Jesus will be a personal priority.

When worship comes from the heart it is because of love.

Luke 7:36-50

After she poured her perfume on Jesus she wept behind Him. "...and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet, and anointing them with the perfume." (v. 38)

":39-47"

For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.

Our worship will be come extravagant, affecting our music, money, time, and devotion to Christ.

Worship from the heart will emerge from a yielded and dedicated life.

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect” (Rom. 12:1-2).

Worship from the heart will draw us to corporate worship.

Bringing together the saints is like joining many pieces of burning wood. The fire gets bigger, brighter, hotter, and greater. So it is with worship together. Fires burn brighter when the wood is close together. It goes out when the pieces separate. The same principle applies to worship.

“... and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near” (Heb. 10:24-25).

Clearly there is a mutual encouragement, one-another aspect of a church service.

We were made to worship together.

A choir made up of different voices and instruments, working together in harmony, makes praise a greater gift to God.

Corporate worship isn't for us – to meet our needs – it's for God.

The question we must always ask isn't, “What did you think of the service?”

The question we must ask is,

“What did God think of it and of those who worshiped?”

Sunday will be the most important day of the week: *The Lord's day*.

“I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day...” (Rev. 1:10).